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DEATH IN THE PALACE.

A

Sermon

IN MEMORY OF

EDWARD EVERETT.

BY
REV. JOHN E. TODD,
PASTOR OF THE CENTRAL CONGREGATIONAL SOCIETY,
BOSTON.

JANUARY 22, 1865.

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BOSTON, January 22, 1865.

REV. JOHN E. TODD.

DEAR SIR, — After listening to your just tribute to the memory of EDWARD EVERETT in your discourse of this morning, a desire has been expressed by many of your friends, that it should be put into a permanent form. Will you favor your people with a copy for publication?

In behalf of the Central Congregational Society,

HENRY EDWARDS,
Chairman of Standing Committee.

BOSTON, January 23, 1865.

HENRY EDWARDS, ESQ., *Chairman of Committee of the Central Congregational Society.*

MY DEAR SIR, — The very complimentary request which you have communicated to me has taken me quite by surprise. I can hardly feel that the sermon of which you speak is worthy of a place among the tributes to the memory of our distinguished fellow-citizen which will be called forth; but I defer to your judgment and the wishes of our friends.

Very truly yours,

JOHN E. TODD.

SERMON.

"Death is come up into our windows, and is entered into our palaces."

Jeremiah ix. 21.

THE palaces of a free people are the homes of those who, simply by the force of princely minds, have ruled the opinions and passions of their countrymen. There is nothing about them to arrest the eye of the traveller; they lend no magnificence to the city, no stateliness to the landscape; they are no splendid architectural triumphs, thronged by visitors wondering at mosaic pavements, and inlaid floors, and frescoed ceilings, and columns of porphyry, and walls hung with works of great masters, and treasuries of jewels, and gilded thrones; they are humble and modest dwellings, hiding among the fertile plantations of Ashland, dimpling the smile of the Potomac, nestling among the farms of Marshfield, lost in the narrow and crowded streets of Boston; their importance is derived from their mighty occupants, and does not long survive them; when these are gone, they soon fall, like the home of Franklin, before the granite tread of business, or, like the home of Hancock, before the progress of private wealth; for an intelligent people reverences men rather than things; and a young people is too rich in the possessions of the present and the

hopes of the future, to cherish with tenderness the relics of the past.

Into another of these our palaces, suddenly, like a thief in the night, a messenger of death has entered, summoning from transactions in an earthly court to the bar of a juster and more august tribunal the greatest of living Americans.

We are still too near the life which has just ended, to be able to see it in its true and full proportions; when we shall have left the building a little behind us, we shall look back upon it with a more appreciative survey. Its minuter features are still too generally covered with the veils of secrecy and confidence under which they were wrought, to permit us to count and study them; we shall hereafter see many a point which is now concealed, coming out into golden light. Yet before the current of time bears us further away from the structure in whose shadow we have been living, it is fitting that we should repeatedly turn, to send backward to it fond, lingering looks, and sorrowful farewells.

The leading incidents in the life of Mr. Everett have been too public and too often chronicled, to leave any necessity for more than a hasty review.

He was the younger son of a Unitarian minister, and was born in Dorchester April 11th, 1794. The times in which he was cradled produced a race of intellectual giants. There seems to be an established law of nature, according to which great men come, like meteors, in showers, with only here and there a straggler between. At the close of the last century, there was a brilliant coterie in Ireland, such as has not yet been reproduced; there were Burke, Curran, Grattan, Plunket, Toler, and a host of lesser stars, each of which would have been of the first magnitude in a

darker firmament. The same age witnessed in England the statesmanship of Pitt, the eloquence of Fox, the military genius of Wellington, the literary triumphs of Scott and Byron and Shelley, the sarcasm of Junius, the learning of Johnson and Gibbon and Hume, the heroism of Nelson, the decisions of Mansfield, and the flash of many an other hardly inferior light. A little later a similar display of intellect illuminated this country. Mr. Everett belonged to the age when Jackson and Scott and Harrison rendered their country's arms illustrious; when Calhoun shook the republic with his erratic intellect; when Webster shed a glory successively upon the bar, the senate, and the cabinet, and electrified the country with his speeches and despatches; when Clay and Benton stood on the floor of Congress; when Choate led juries captive at the wheels of his fiery eloquence; when Story adorned the platform, the bench, and the lecture-room; when Mason and Channing graced the pulpit, and Beecher and Parker thundered from it; when Prescott clothed history in the beauty of romance, and Irving filled with charm the walks of literature. Of this generation of mighties the last is now gone. Yet rather than recognize in this their departure symptoms of degeneration and decay among us, we may believe that periods of great commotion and excitement are the winds which stir the mysterious deeps of human being; and that therefore the tumultuous experience through which we are now passing is destined to be the beginning of the roll of another wave of genius, which shall break in its riches upon another generation.

At the very early age of thirteen, Mr. Everett was sent to Harvard College, where, after the usual course, he graduated with the highest honors. The next two years were

spent in the Divinity School in Cambridge, in preparation for the work of the ministry. No sooner were his studies completed than he received an invitation to settle with the Brattle Street Church of this city. It is an evidence of his distinguished ability, that at the age of nineteen he was thought worthy to be the successor of a preacher of such power and eloquence as the noted Buckminster. The expectations which he had excited were not disappointed. He began to exhibit in the pulpit that persuasive oratory which constituted through life his greatest charm and power. The most intellectual men of the day listened to him with delight and in tears. But it was not as a preacher that he was to rise to greatness.

After two years spent in the ministry, he accepted an appointment to the professorship of Greek in Harvard College, with the understanding that he should be allowed to spend some time in Europe in preparation. It was during this absence of nearly four years that he laid the foundations of that extensive and intimate acquaintance with eminent foreigners which he enjoyed through life, and through which his subsequent efforts secured an immediate and permanent hold upon the consideration of leading men in all lands.

On his return to this country in 1819, he entered upon the duties of his office. His perfect acquaintance with the Greek language, and his abilities as a lecturer, raised him at once to eminence as a scholar. But it was not in the class-room that he was to earn immortality.

In the course of the following year he assumed the editorship of the "North American," a review which had at that time but a limited reputation. This was the field in which his peculiar genius first began to find room to

expatiate; for although it is true that his gifts were varied, and his successes manifold, it is undoubtedly upon his efforts as an essayist and orator that his fame will most securely and permanently rest. In more than a hundred articles, he displayed a variety and profundity of learning, a mastery of language, and a delicacy and earnestness of sentiment, which won the admiration of the reading world.

In the fourth year of his labors as a professor, he delivered the first of that series of orations and speeches with which his name is especially associated. In this year, also, he left the chair of the professor for a seat in the National House of Representatives. The ten years which he spent there were years of hard labor, — years, also, of repeated successful efforts. The hall that was accustomed to the thunders of Webster, and the eloquence of Clay and Calhoun, listened, also, in silence and with rapture, to the graceful and glowing periods of Everett. The greatest speakers of the day heard him with delight, and unqualified praise.

In 1835, and each of the three succeeding years, he was called by the people of this commonwealth to be their chief magistrate. It was his lot to govern at a time when there was little honor to be won by administrative ability; but he was already a man to confer more honor upon such an office than can be gained from it in even the most critical emergencies. Yet Mr. Everett was never a thoroughly *popular* man, especially as a politician. He was too just, too true, too brave.

Soon after his retirement from the chair, he made a tour through Europe for health and recreation. It was during his absence that Webster, newly-appointed Secretary of State, secured his services as minister to the Court of

St. James. For four years, and through as many changes of the home government, he won respect for his country, even at that fastidious court, and through a period of excitement, in which the passions of the two nations were on the point of bursting into the flames of war. Never has the republic been more nobly represented.

On his return to this country in 1845, he was elected President of Harvard College, the institution of which he had been, as a pupil and as a professor, the pride. It is no disparagement to him to allow that this, of all the positions which he filled, was the one in which he was least successful. The reason for it was honorable to him. His mind, high-toned by nature, refined by culture, long accustomed to the courtliness of the finest society in the world, and the dignity of diplomatic circles, could not adapt itself to the management of young men in that half-fledged state, — when they have ceased to be boys, and have not yet learned to be gentlemen.

In 1852, he was appointed Secretary of State by President Fillmore, in place of the lamented Webster. No ordinary man, following in the tracks of such a predecessor, and especially in the short time that remained to the Fillmore administration, could have won for himself any enviable distinction; but Mr. Everett succeeded in writing a letter on the Tripartite Treaty, which drew upon him the admiring gratitude of his countrymen, and the thoughtful attention of the civilized world.

The next year, he was chosen to represent Massachusetts in the United States Senate; but in consequence of ill-health, he was soon compelled to resign his seat. From that time he has kept himself before the public by his writings and speeches. Foreseeing the political rupture of our

country, he endeavored, by the preparation and delivery throughout the country of a magnificent oration upon Washington, to revive a little the consciousness of common ties and common interests. The Mt. Vernon Papers, written for popular reading, were prepared with the same patriotic end in view. The profits of these efforts, amounting to nearly seventy thousand dollars, were freely given to the fund for the purchase of the home of Washington. Their only effect was to procure for Mr. Everett universal respect and imperishable admiration.

In the presidential election of 1860, his name appeared on the ticket of the so-called conservative Union party. It was Mr. Everett's good fortune to be defeated; for by the noble stand which he took by the government of his country, as soon as it was violently assailed, he has gained for himself a place in the hearts and memories of his countrymen, though but a private citizen, which he could never have secured in the highest office under one who has since joined his country's foes.

The pillar upon which Mr. Everett's fame will chiefly rest is his *oratory*. Eminent as a preacher, a scholar, a politician, a governor, a diplomat, a statesman, he will be remembered above all as an *orator*.

There is rarely a speaker whose words suffer more in being separated from the personal delivery of their author. It is one thing to read Mr. Everett's speeches; it was another to hear them. That dignified and majestic presence, that open and benevolent countenance, that mild and thoughtful eye, that silvery voice, trained and modulated with as fine an art as ever flute was played, those easy but expressive gestures, carefully studied, yet seemingly spontaneous, — it is difficult to realize that from the halls and

platforms where they have been so often and so recently familiar to us, they are gone forever. If he did not employ the fierce and sinister delivery of Calhoun, if he could not rouse enthusiasm to the pitch of madness with the mysterious magic of Clay, if he could not wield the naked thunders of Webster, if he was not fired with the nervous impetuosity of Choate, there was none to vie with him in insinuating persuasiveness and a captivating grace, which lacked neither warmth nor power. He could not crush like Webster, or wither like Choate, or excite like Clay; he was not the man to *wish* to do it; but often have his audiences followed him, breathless and entranced, over wave after wave of elaborate and swelling thought, to the very summits of eloquence; and when he had a theme fitted to waken the peculiar patriotic fervor of his soul, — like the revival of the Bunker Hill Monument Association, the Life of Washington, or the maintenance of the Federal Government, — he spoke often from such a depth of feeling as to melt the hearts, and moisten the eyes, of all his hearers.

If, apart from the charm of his delivery, we seek to ascertain from his writings wherein his great power lay, we are struck, first of all, with the splendor of his scholarship. His language and style are those of a master. The Greek professor seems to have formed his oratory in the schools, and upon the models, of Athens. Nothing escapes him which would offend the ears even of an Areopagite. He never descends to vulgar expressions; he never soars on the wings of bombast; he never deigns to court notoriety with eccentricities; he never utters a careless word; he never shows his consummate art. Studied elegance and elaborate finish crown every sentence. He draws from rich stores of

classical learning, illustrations and allusions with which to animate and adorn his language; but instead of being, as in the writings of many, interwoven, as it were, with the mental product, with unskilful and pedantic hand, they all seem to have passed through the loom of his own intellect, and to have become an essential part of his own thought. If composition may be compared to architecture, the style of Mr. Everett, chaste, proportioned, polished, was to that of Mr. Choate wild, luxurious, overloaded,—what a Grecian temple is to a cathedral in the florid Gothic; while that of Mr. Webster was like some bold, severe, and rugged natural rock.

The scholarship of Mr. Everett appears in the *substance* even more than in the *style* of his writings. The productions of his pen embrace a vast variety of themes, and reveal almost unlimited treasures of learning. He never touched a subject but to illuminate it. Already in his twenty-fifth year he was one of the finest of living Greek scholars. As time passed on, one language after another, and one department of knowledge after another, opened for him its stores. At the time of his decease, he was, undoubtedly, the best read student of international jurisprudence that our country could boast. It was not in vain that the light burned which often at midnight, glimmering from the windows of his library, attracted the eye of the passenger. He had ransacked the treasuries of theology, law, diplomacy, oratory, and history. It was in this last department that he ranged without a rival. There was none like him to irradiate the obscurities, and solve the perplexities of a subject, by pouring upon it the light of precedents and former experience. And yet his learning had no savor of pedantry. There are learned men whose minds are teeming and overflowing with

knowledge, but who have no power to arrange or employ it; they are great only in industry and in memory. Mr. Everett's was one of those great minds which have clear and discriminating perceptions, sound judgments, and the power of bringing order out of chaos, and moulding matter into forms of life. That which he read was not stored away in a mental cabinet, to be forgotten when most needed, lost when most diligently sought, or dragged out and awkwardly welded on his work; it was poured into the crucible of his mind, to issue interfused with a glowing stream of molten thought.

A distinguishing characteristic of Mr. Everett's productions, and one of the secrets of their power, was the *goodness* which permeated them, and which beautifully irradiated his private life.

His orations convey the same impression that was received from a perusal of his noble countenance, — an impression of calm benevolence and majestic purity. He was never fired with that personal ambition which has consumed the lives, and warped the conduct, and tainted the principles, and broken the hearts, of so many of our public men. In the midst of the fiercest temptations of political life, he never swerved from the strait and narrow path of incorruptibility and temperance. Tried by such sore afflictions as few men have known, within a veil which we have no right or wish to lift, he suffered no bitterness to be infused into his disposition, but bore his griefs with silent, manly dignity. In society he was ever genial, interested, benignant, though reserved. In private life he was such, that to know him best was to love him most.

There have been other orators among us who have risen to eminence; but some of them have achieved a reputation

by indulging in stinging personalities; others have dipped their pens in gall, and revelled in withering sarcasms; others have catered to a misguided public taste or sentiment; others have sacrificed their dignity, if not their principles, to a vulgar popularity; others have soiled their productions with stains of passion, prejudice, illiberal feeling; others have marred the glory of their public career, by irregularities of private life. But none of these was Everett. His words and acts, as well in private as in public, were instinct with purity, gentleness, and goodness. He combined the strength of the lion with the gentleness of the lamb.

His views and conduct were such as could only have proceeded from a union of greatness of *mind*, and greatness of *heart*. With an intense affection for his country, and a keen sense of British injustice, he was yet able to represent his government at the Court of St. James, during a period of feverish excitement, with perfect dignity and moderation; and throughout our more recent provocations, Mr. Everett, although he has not failed to appreciate the wrong of England's course, has never dropped a word calculated to inflame popular passion. He was one who dared, in the strength of conscientious conviction, to breast a swelling tide of popular sentiment. He was one of the few who, with a strong conviction of the evils, and detestation of the abuses, of slavery, could yet refrain from comprehending all connected with it in one indiscriminate anathema. He was one of the few whose patriotism lifted them above subservience to party, the associations of friendship, and the pride of opinion. He was one of the few who, with the heart of a true statesman, yearned over his misguided countrymen, and urged the vigorous prosecution of war against the rebellious, and the generous treatment of the conquered, with

equal eloquence. His greatness was shown in the meekness with which he could acknowledge an error, — the magnanimity with which he could forgive a fault. His compassion for the suffering Tennesseans and Georgians has been testified in deathless strains of feeling and power; yet this was but an exhibition of a compassion which was continually flowing out in more secret channels, which will never be fully known till the recording angel shall have opened his volumes. The public life of Mr. Everett could not have more fitly ended than with the speech which was his last; nor, as he went up, a sinful man, to his Father's house, could anything have more recommended him to forgiveness, and the best robes, than the plea which rung from his dying lips, for mercy and generosity toward the repentant prodigals of Savannah.

If there was one virtue which, more than any other, appeared in Mr. Everett's character, — one principle which, more than any other, governed his conduct, it was the love of his country. This love was manifested in his constant interest in all that affected the liberty, intelligence, and morality of the people. The aim of most of his efforts, the thread upon which they are strung, is the promotion of the real good of the people. Schools, libraries, and public improvements never failed to secure his countenance. He never withheld his counsels or his services, when demanded even by the smallest interest of the community. He was a faithful friend and supporter of all religious institutions; and one of the last acts of his life was a successful resistance of encroachments upon the sanctity of the Sabbath.

But, undoubtedly, the greatest proof of Mr. Everett's patriotism, and that which has engraven his name in indelible characters upon the hearts of his countrymen, is the

promptness and earnestness with which he flew to his country's support in the hour of her agony. The assistance which he brought to our government in the encouragement which he offered to its defenders, the decision to which his example brought the wavering, the respect which its espousal by such a man secured for our cause abroad, can never be told. When others were unable to shake off the fetters of preconceived opinions, and party prejudices, and old associations; when others consulted private ambition and interest, rather than their country's welfare; when others stood aloof, or even lent their helpful sympathies to the nation's enemies; when others offered *conditional* assistance, and would help to save their country only in their own way; he brought to her aid, without reserve, all his vast influence and matchless eloquence, and rose in her defence with a patriot's devotion and a giant's strength; and when the others shall have fallen into deserved oblivion, the gratitude of his country shall trim anew the light immortal which burns before the name of *Everett*.

The lesson of his life to us all, and especially to young men, is the worth and power of *goodness*. It is as a *good* man that he is presented to us for our imitation. His gifts, his opportunities, his acquirements will not be granted to any of us; his *goodness* may be the inheritance of all. It is often felt, particularly by young men, that goodness and purity are allied to weakness; and that success in the competitions of business and politics requires a certain looseness of virtue and dissoluteness of conduct. The success and greatness of Mr. Everett, a success and greatness not achieved in spite of virtue, but resting and built upon integrity, purity, temperance, charity, as its foundation-stones, is an emphatic and irrefutable proof of the folly of

such notions. He has set before us a sublime example of simple goodness and patriotic devotion, "and by it, he, being dead, yet speaketh."

Of that which pertains to his *religious* life and feelings, they only have a right to speak, if any there are, who were admitted into the sanctuary of his most sacred moments. We know that a man is not justified before *God* by the purity of his life, but by the faith of the Son of God; and we know that Mr. Everett was one of those to whom it was not given to see the full "truth as it is in Jesus." But we know, also, that such full perception is not essential to the *love* of Him who said, "If a man love Me, My Father will love him." If we may know men by their fruits, such love of man as filled Mr. Everett's heart and life, testifies of a love of the man Christ Jesus, and inspires the confident hope that that name which is enrolled among those of our greatest men, and is imperishably written on the heart of our country, is recorded also in "the Lamb's Book of Life."

It is idle and invidious to draw comparisons, and we would say nothing of the dead but that which is good; and yet, as we pass in thought from one to another of the resting-places of our great men, we can but remember of this one, that his vast powers were devoted rather to his country's disruption than to her welfare; of another, that he served his own ambition rather than his people; of another, that a generally noble career was marred by some act which we could wish had been left undone; of others, that their greatness was defaced by the private vices of the duellist, the debtor, the profane, the libertine, the gamester, or the drunkard; it is but seldom that we can mourn for a great man with the feeling that there was hardly anything in him which we could wish different; but there are two

such men sleeping in our country's soil, with respect to whom this feeling may be especially entertained; two men in abilities and in character most like, — the one the master, the other the disciple; the one the model, the other the warmest eulogist and closest imitator; the one the father of his country, the other her purest son. There are *two* spots now where the traveller may stand and drop a tear of admiration, gratitude, and sorrow, over the remains of *combined* greatness and goodness; the one is among the solitudes of Mt. Vernon, — it is the tomb of *Washington;* the other is among the multitudes of Mt. Auburn, — it is the grave of *Everett.*

There are some circumstances connected with his departure which are exceedingly painful; and yet, on reflection, we find in them exceeding propriety and beauty.

We could wish that he had been allowed a little space for preparation for the solemnity of entrance into eternity, and for the testimony of his faith; and yet we are ready to acquiesce in the arrangements of Providence when we remember, that it is not the last moment, but the *life* which affords at once the best preparation, and the best evidence of fitness, for the final departure.

We could wish that he had fallen in the midst of friends; that hands of love had ministered to his last necessities; that Memory had been permitted to soothe him with her songs of duty done, and Religion to stand by him with uplifted finger; that a nation, hushed and sorrowing, had attended him to the verge of life; and yet, when we remember how alone he stood in his greatness, the last of his generation of statesmen, the mournful survivor of almost all his family and domestic happiness, lonely in his intellect, his patriotism, his age, there was a fitness in his

expiring alone; and it was beautifully and appropriately ordered, that he should come to the door of the sepulchre, where the Lord has lain, bearing the precious spices of a stainless life, "as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week."

We could wish that he had lived to see the end of the great rebellion, and the resurrection of his country, for which he had so ardently hoped and so earnestly labored, and to which he had so largely contributed; and yet, the death of *faith* is more sublime than that of full fruition: not all the hill-tops of Canaan could offer so glorious and suitable a dying pillow to the deep-hearted old leader of Israel as the rocky summit of Pisgah; it was fitting that he should be numbered with the noble company of those who, confidently "looking for a better country," have "died in faith, not having received the promise."

We could wish that he had been spared to us yet many years, to guide us by his counsels, to enrich us with his experience, to delight us with the music of his eloquence; we could mourn that his great powers, which as yet showed no traces of decay, should be so early extinguished; and yet, when we remember how sad it is to see a great mind breaking up, and a noble intellect shattered and overthrown by age, it was *well* that his sun should go down while it was yet day. It was a grand termination for so noble a life. It was the end for which the gifted buccaneer so earnestly prayed, — the end which, perhaps, every man of powerful intellect covets for himself, —

> "The end of tropic sun;
> No pale gradations quench his ray;
> No twilight dews his wrath allay;
> With disc like battle-target red,
> He rushes to his burning bed,
> Dyes the wide wave with purple light,
> Then — sinks *at once*, — and all is night."

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